



**10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to
the
Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

“Healthy wetlands, healthy people”

**Changwon, Republic of Korea,
28 October-4 November 2008**

Ramsar COP10 DOC. 16

**Overview of the implementation of the Convention’s CEPA
Programme for the period 2006-2008**

Introduction

1. The current Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA)¹ Programme was adopted through Resolution VIII.31 at COP8 in 2002 and provided a six-year programme of work that recognizes the importance of communication, education and public awareness as central and cross-cutting elements for implementing the Convention.
2. This overview of the implementation of the Programme is provided by the CEPA Oversight Panel and is based largely on the 129 completed National Reports submitted in time for analysis, particularly the key CEPA indicators included under Strategy 4.4 on supporting and assisting in the implementation of the Convention’s CEPA Programme, but also including other relevant indicators. To a lesser extent this report also includes other developments during the triennium that are pertinent to the implementation of the CEPA Programme, including the Secretariat’s own CEPA activities.
3. As the last triennium represents the completion of the current CEPA Programme (2002-2008), the information gathered from the National Reports permits the CEPA Oversight Panel to evaluate the current programme and guide the development of the next CEPA Programme to be considered at COP10. It is useful to identify in the information received what key components Contracting Parties have used to support CEPA implementation in their countries, what levels most activities have been delivered at, and which components have been the most difficult to deliver. The increased levels of CEPA activity overall are encouraging and align with the steps that the Ramsar Convention has taken to recognize the role that CEPA can deliver.

Main achievements since COP9 and priorities for the next triennium

4. The Convention now has the highest number of CEPA National Focal Points (NFPs) in place, both government and NGO, since the adoption of the first CEPA Resolution in

¹ It has been proposed, in draft Resolution DR 8, that the acronym CEPA should be changed to mean “Communication, Education, Participation, and Awareness”.

1999, thus providing improved leadership for national CEPA programmes and an opportunity to take the programme forward more forcefully in the coming triennium.

5. World Wetlands Day has further developed as *the* annual in-country campaign day for wetlands during this triennium, affording the Convention the opportunity to develop and deliver key wetland messages to target audiences at national and local levels through the actions of governments, NGOs, and others. Overall this brings better national and global recognition of the value of wetlands and the role of the Ramsar Convention. Analysis of WWD achievements is being carried out and will assist in maximizing the efficiency in the production and content of the Secretariat's WWD materials and provide feedback to Parties on the breadth of the target audiences and messages to stimulate further thought on their planning of WWD events and activities.
6. The abundant evidence of a diversity of CEPA programmes, projects and campaigns reported by Parties, both in the specific indicator for this purpose and in text responses throughout the National Reports, should reassure the Convention that CEPA is being recognized as a key tool for achieving wetland wise use.
7. Further evidence of the rising focus on CEPA comes from the reporting on the most successful aspects of the triennium (section 2B of the National Reports): 57 countries mentioned a CEPA activity amongst other activities (44% of respondents) and 25 countries mentioned a CEPA activity as a primary success for the triennium. Activities most frequently mentioned concerned awareness-raising and participation, mainly at the local level (50% of responses), and others included World Wetlands Day, wetland centre development, training, and CEPA action planning.
8. An additional indication of the rising recognition of CEPA as a wetland conservation tool comes from the data from section 2D of the National Reports in which Parties have articulated their priorities for the next triennium. Forty-four countries (34%) highlighted CEPA priorities for the next triennium, with a majority (14 countries) identifying awareness-raising for particular target groups on the value of wetland ecosystem services to promote better engagement in effective management with both local communities and key government sectors. Also identified were the need for training and improved participation capacity at the local level, development of wetland training and awareness centres, and the development of broader CEPA programmes. This overall picture is supported by the 20% of countries who identified in section 2C significant difficulties during the last triennium in developing much needed awareness, training, and participation interventions to improve wetland wise use implementation. Most often the lack of funding was the key limiting factor.
9. While we can identify progress in CEPA action planning over the last triennium, there is reason for concern at the slow rate of development. There are clearly many CEPA interventions taking place and clear identification of the importance of CEPA implementation in the coming triennium, but there is a need for a more strategic approach to CEPA planning. This is evidenced not only in the poor response to CEPA planning activity but also in the low positive response as to whether a suitable planning mechanism is in place. With more CEPA NFPs now nominated, and better recognition of the importance of CEPA for the Convention, a key challenge for Parties in the coming triennium will be to achieve a more strategic approach to planning. Where are the CEPA needs most urgent, what CEPA tools need to be used, who are the key targets and key

actors? – these are the challenging questions Parties have to answer in developing a CEPA plan of work. The new CEPA tool for planning will be of assistance to Parties in this work.

10. The launching of the CEPA Oversight Panel by the Convention and the provision of an Advisory Board for Capacity Building by the Netherlands government this triennium both strengthen the monitoring and advice to Parties on CEPA issues. The inclusion of a CEPA expert in the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) in this triennium has brought greater recognition of the role of CEPA in the work of the STRP and has already brought added value to the guidance developed during the triennium. In particular, the role of CEPA in river basin management has been better articulated and the assessment of the use in general of Ramsar guidance has provided the Convention with some key information about how to improve the broad utility of Ramsar guidance in the future.

CEPA Programme implementation since COP9

The CEPA Oversight Panel

11. Following Resolution IX.18 (2005) and Standing Committee Decision SC34-12, a CEPA Oversight Panel was established in 2006 with a mandate to monitor and report on the implementation of the CEPA Programme. The Panel has met twice during the triennium and will meet for a third time during COP10. Full reports of the first two meetings are available at http://www.ramsar.org/outreach_oversight_panel.htm.
12. During the triennium, the Panel has:
 - played a key role in the drafting of the CEPA Programme to be considered at COP10;
 - clarified the role of the CEPA Focal Points (now incorporated in the draft CEPA Programme);
 - assisted in the drafting of indicators used in the National Reports; and
 - liaised with the Ramsar Advisory Board on Capacity Building (described in more detail in paragraph 50 below).
13. At the 36th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC36), in 2006, it was agreed at the suggestion of the CEPA Panel that the membership of the Panel should formally include two government and two NGO CEPA Focal Points (an increase from the original of one of each). The Panel felt that the Focal Points were very important in reflecting the practical realities of implementing a CEPA Programme within a Party (details of the membership of the Panel in the current triennium are available at http://www.ramsar.org/outreach_oversight_panel.htm). It was also agreed at SC36 that a participation expert should be appointed to the Panel, and efforts have been made in this direction. SC36 has agreed to the future work priorities of the Panel, although this may have to be revised in the light of the implementation results in this report. The summary report from the Panel to SC36 is available at http://www.ramsar.org/sc/36/key_sc36_doc17.htm.

CEPA expertise in the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel

14. While the CEPA Resolution called for the setting up of an Expert Working Group on CEPA, the decision was taken by the Convention, following the adoption of Resolution IX.11 at COP8 on the *modus operandi* of STRP, to appoint a CEPA expert as a full member of STRP as an alternative solution. The role of the CEPA expert is to provide the necessary CEPA input to all stages of the Panel's work, thus ensuring that CEPA issues in the technical work of the Convention are effectively addressed.
15. During the triennium, the person has brought CEPA expertise to the development of a number of STRP tasks, particularly the work on wetlands and river basin management and the investigation on the use of Ramsar guidance by the Convention and its follow-up. In addition, the CEPA expert has assisted in the drafting and publication of the leaflet *Delivering the Ramsar Convention in your country: National Focal Points and their roles* during this triennium.

Designating CEPA Focal Points

16. The CEPA NFPs, both government and NGO, are the key force at the national level in implementing the CEPA Programme. This is clear from the roles and responsibilities now clearly defined by the CEPA Oversight Panel and included in Appendix 2 of the Draft CEPA Resolution (DR 8) to be considered at COP10. It is significant that many of the government CEPA NFPs play multiple roles within their Administrative Authorities, almost certainly limiting their capacity to fulfill any one of the roles. The lack of capacity at the national level within the Ramsar Administrative Authorities is clearly recognized in the regional reports to COP10.
17. The current figures show that, as of the 1st of June 2008, 80% of Contracting Parties have designated their government CEPA NFPs and 67% their national NGO CEPA NFPs. Comparative figures from COPs 8 and 9, shown in Fig. 1 below, provide encouraging evidence of a more serious approach to CEPA implementation in the coming triennium. There is a consistent pattern of reluctance in a proportion of countries to nominate an NGO CEPA NFP to work alongside the government person (and this gap appears to have increased in this triennium): given that NGOs can bring considerable CEPA expertise to any CEPA work, this situation needs to be reconsidered.

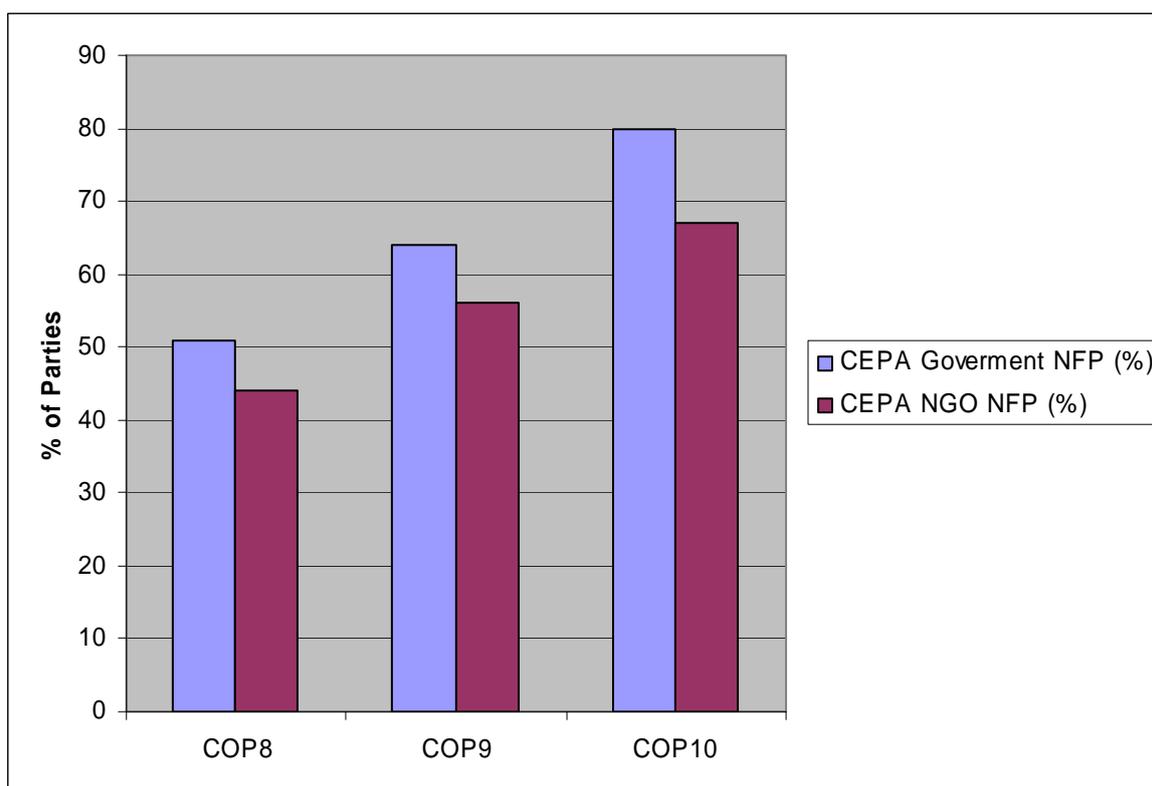


Fig. 1 A comparison of the nominations of government and NGO CEPA National Focal Points from the COP8-COP10 reporting periods.

18. It has to be noted as in the past that the rather frequent changes in Focal Points is not conducive to the development of an effective national CEPA programme. While the National Reports to COP10 added 20 new CEPA NFP designations in 15 countries, 66 CEPA NFPs were replaced and 7 were removed without replacement. This represents a significant level of change and does not provide continuity in any CEPA programme.

Establishing a CEPA planning and implementation mechanism (Indicator 4.4.1)

19. The CEPA Programme emphasizes the need to take a strategic rather than *ad hoc* approach to CEPA planning and the first step in this is to ensure that a planning mechanism is in place. Indicator 4.4.1 investigates this.
20. With only 29 countries (22%) responding positively, there is still quite some development that needs to take place for the Convention as a whole. The lowest positive responses came from the Neotropics and Europe, both falling below 20%. What is perhaps most worrying about these figures is that there has been no improvement since COP8.
21. While the 40% of countries responding negatively to this question is an improvement on the 57% in 2005, the overall conclusion is that there is a need for much more emphasis within Parties on the value of CEPA planning at an appropriate level (such as national, catchment, or site level), and this is confirmed by the results from the next indicator. Perhaps with this improved recognition will come an appropriate level of funding for CEPA implementation.

Developing an action plan for wetland CEPA (*Indicator 4.4.2*)

22. The low level of positive response to the question on whether a national or other level CEPA Plan has been developed is consistent with the low positive response rate on the establishment of a planning mechanism. The analysis shows that 18 countries have an action plan for wetland CEPA. This includes three of the four countries that had reported a plan at COP9 (Germany, Hungary, and Spain) and an additional 15 countries, bringing the overall percentage to 14%. Sixty five countries (50%) responded 'no' to this question. To summarise the Panel's understanding of the text information available through the National Reports:
- Three countries have submitted action plans to the Secretariat (all in the previous triennium, Germany, Hungary, and Spain). *NB. Australia has also submitted a national plan but their National Report was not included in this analysis.*
 - Eight countries responded 'yes' but either supplied no detailed textual information or have not yet sent the finalized plans to the Secretariat (Azerbaijan, Belize, Dominican Republic, France, Mali, Samoa, St Lucia, United Kingdom). The Secretariat is following up with these countries for further details.
 - Four countries have indicated in their text responses that their CEPA plans are incorporated within site management plans (China, India, Republic of Korea, Slovenia).
 - One country has reported a national CEPA Plan of Action developed under the CBD and thus only covering wetlands to a rather limited extent (Malaysia).
 - One country has reported on a programme of work on 'Youth, Nature, Food and Health' that addresses much broader issues, although it does include wetlands and supports Ramsar objectives (Netherlands).
 - One country has not yet completed the plan (Uruguay)
23. While four countries have indicated that CEPA Plans are incorporated within site management plans, this question was not asked in the National Report, and it is known that there are other countries that have taken this approach to CEPA planning but not reported on it. This is worthy of further investigation and is very likely to produce more positive responses in this area.
24. Worthy of note is the fact that China currently has an Ramsar Small Grants Fund grant to develop a national CEPA Action Plan, and this work is ongoing. This is the first time that an SGF grant has been awarded for the development of a national CEPA plan.
25. As a further development during this triennium that will assist Parties in the action planning process, UNEP-DELCO provided funds to the Secretariat to develop materials on the process for action planning at whatever level Parties are comfortable with, national, catchment or local. IUCN's Learning and Leadership Unit, in collaboration with the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), have developed the document *Participatory Action Planning: Techniques to facilitate the process* which will be distributed to Parties and made available through the Ramsar Web site. Part of this CEPA 'tool' was successfully tested at the European Regional Meeting in 2008.

26. With this new CEPA planning tool, together with the complementary *CEPA Toolkit* developed by CEC for the Convention on Biological Diversity, Parties will be well equipped to develop a more strategic planning approach to CEPA in the next triennium.

Taking action to communicate and share information cross-sectorally on wetland issues
(Indicator 4.4.3)

27. Sharing information cross-sectorally on wetland issues (across ministries, departments and agencies) remains a key challenge for many Parties. This need is articulated in many of the key Resolutions where implementation is only possible with cross-sectoral involvement, particularly in the case of the Convention's water-related guidance and its value in planning at the basin level. With 69 countries (53%) responding 'yes' to this question and only 10% responding negatively, Parties seem to have moved forward in this area during the triennium; the comparable figures for COP9 were 43% and 8% respectively. In terms of regional differences, Africa, Asia, Europe and Oceania all recorded positive responses of 50% or more this triennium, with Asia quite significantly ahead at 67%, while the Neotropics and North America produced the lowest positive responses at 39% and 33% respectively.
28. The textual answers for this question were very broad-ranging, making any detailed analysis challenging, but they noted, for example, the use of specifically organized wetland workshops, symposia and projects, both national and local, to share important information cross-sectorally.
29. At least 18 Parties made specific reference to their National Wetlands/Ramsar Committees (NRC) as a key mechanism for sharing information effectively cross-sectorally. Of relevance too is that 59 Parties (46%) responded positively to having a cross-sectoral NRC in place and operational (Indicator 4.8.2). In addition, 27 Parties (21%) recorded that they have established cross-sectoral management committees at Ramsar sites, thus providing a useful mechanism for cross-sectoral sharing of information at the local level (Indicator 2.3.3).

Using national campaigns, programmes, and projects to raise community awareness of ecosystem services provided by wetlands (Indicator 4.4.4)

30. A significant 53% of Parties responded that they carried out national campaigns, projects and programmes to raise community awareness of the ecosystem services provided by wetlands, often a key factor in any successful management planning processes for Ramsar sites and other wetlands. The 69 countries responding positively were quite evenly distributed between Africa, Europe and the Neotropics, with Asia and North America reporting significantly higher responses than other regions at 67% and 100% respectively. These results represent an improvement over the COP9 result, where globally only 41% of Parties responded 'yes' to this question.
31. A comment from New Zealand aptly sums up the very broad range of campaigns, projects and programmes of CEPA activities in the text responses: "Even though a CEPA Action Plan has not been developed, CEPA activities are happening across the country". This question accounted for the greatest volume of textual answers and noted a range of activities involving TV and radio shows, films, Web sites, electronic fora, seminars, workshops, production of commemorative stamps and coins on wetlands, conferences, debates, children's magazines devoted to wetlands, campaign days such as World Wetlands

Day, World Water Day, World Water Monitoring Day, and World Migratory Bird Day, campaigns on issues in specific wetland ecosystems such as coral reefs, and campaigns dealing with flood prevention, and more.

32. Although a more detailed analysis of the text responses has not been possible, it can be said that the large majority of activities were planned and delivered at the local site level; relatively fewer Parties noted campaigns or programmes that were planned and driven at the national level, reflecting undoubtedly the added challenges both practical and financial of working at this level.
33. A number of countries noted that various internationally-funded projects and programmes have assisted in awareness raising at national and local levels: UNDP/GEF, MedwetCoast, EU-LIFE Nature, and EU INTERREG project-funding mechanisms have all been mentioned on several occasions for their support in CEPA activities at national and local levels. These can have a significant impact – in Asia alone there are national UNDP-GEF programmes currently being implemented in Bangladesh, P.R. China, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Republic of Korea, bringing both expertise and funding together to develop effective CEPA programmes at all levels as an integral part of the management of wetlands.

Ensuring public participation in decision-making on wetlands, and especially involving local stakeholders in the selection and management of Ramsar sites (*Indicator 4.1.3*)

34. There is considerable evidence, especially at the site level but also in terms of basin-level management, that public participation, particularly of local stakeholders, is key to successful wetland management. This indicator is included under a strategy on local and indigenous communities and their active participation in wetland wise use, but of course ensuring active and effective participation is very much a CEPA skill.
35. In the draft CEPA Resolution to be considered at COP10, the importance of participation at all levels in wetland wise use is fully recognized with the acronym CEPA representing communication, education, *participation* and awareness.
36. The analysis of this indicator produced very positive results that are consistent with the many textual answers under the indicators in paragraph 29 above and in the indicator investigating World Wetlands Day. A positive response was given by 84 Parties (65%), and only 10 Parties responded negatively. The responses at the regional level were particularly high in Africa, Neotropics and Oceania (all above 70%) and lowest in Asia at 46%.

Using the Convention's water-related guidance and incorporating the necessary CEPA expertise into river basin and coastal zone planning and management (*Indicators 1.4.1 and 1.4.2*)

37. The need to integrate wetlands into river basin management has been clearly articulated over the last two triennia and is considered essential by the Convention to sustain the wetland ecosystem services that wetlands provide for people. A key issue in integrated wetland and water resource planning is the need for communication between the water and wetland sectors, improved public awareness of management issues, and the effective involvement of all stakeholders, including local communities, in management processes. The National Reports indicate that 38 Parties (29%) have used the Convention's guidance on integrated water resource management. While this may seem a disappointing result, it is

a substantial improvement on the COP9 result of only 15% positive responses. This is a challenging area for countries and the progress is encouraging.

38. Consistent with this result are the global statistics on incorporating CEPA expertise in river basin and coastal zone planning, with 36 Parties (28%) responding positively. Of some concern is the very low positive response from the Neotropics, with only one Party responding positively to this question (4%). This is not consistent with the results from other regions.
39. During this triennium, the STRP has looked at the integration of wetlands into river basin management, and specific sections on the role of CEPA in management planning and implementation have been included. The role of CEPA will be further elucidated in the Information Paper/Technical Report on case studies in river basin management currently being prepared by STRP.

Celebrating World Wetlands Day (*Indicator 4.4.5*)

40. The rising popularity of WWD as a key campaign day is shown in the response figures, with 115 Parties (89%) recording that they had celebrated WWD at some level. Only 9 Parties (7%) recorded a negative answer. The level of response was similar across the regions, with Asia, Europe and the Neotropics each reporting over a 90% positive response rate (and North America and Oceania each 100%); Africa was rather lower at 82% yet still a very encouraging response. Globally this is an improvement on COP9 reporting where there was a 72% 'yes' response. This improvement was mirrored in each region with the greatest improvement in Asia, which recorded an increase in positive responses from 64% 'Yes' in 2005 to 92% in 2008.
41. The Convention's Web site records many of the reports that are received for WWD and it is clear from this and from the text responses in the National Reports that there is a great diversity of WWD actors and partnerships between actors involving government, NGOs, and others. There is also a great diversity in WWD activities such as conferences, workshops, wetland visits, wetland fairs, street theatre, painting competitions, etc. Although no formal assessment has been made, it seems from both National Reports and Web reports that WWD is firmly accepted as a 'normal' part of most Parties' annual wetland wise use activities, and its popularity and impact is growing each year.
42. In terms of WWD coordination and reporting, special mention should be made of the effective mechanism set up by France over the past few years. Through a system of five specialist research and communication centres for different wetland types, WWD is coordinated throughout the country and the list of events is communicated to the Secretariat. In the last triennium, these centres have collectively reported over 250 separate WWD activities throughout the country each year.
43. To assess WWD as a Ramsar campaign more rigorously, the Secretariat has contracted a consultant during this year to carry out an assessment of World Wetlands Day with four key objectives, to:
 - assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat in identifying themes, preparing and disseminating appropriate materials, and reporting on WWD activities,

especially in the light of the current budget from the Danone/Evian Fund, which is the sole source of funding;

- assess the diversity of WWD actors and their targets, and the apparent impact of their WWD actions;
- assess the needs and expectations of WWD actors in terms of WWD materials from the Secretariat; and,
- in the light of the above, assess the need and potential for further development of WWD to reach out effectively to a broader range of WWD actors and targets on key wetland issues.

44. The results of this analysis will be reported to the Convention through an information paper to COP10 and will assist in the further refinement of WWD as *the* campaign day of the year for the Convention.

Establishing wetland education centres at Ramsar sites and other wetlands (*Indicator 4.4.6*)

45. With 46 Parties (36%) reporting that they have established wetland education centres in Ramsar sites and other wetlands, the performance for this indicator has not improved over the triennium; the comparative figure for COP9 was 35%. These global figures mask regional differences – both Neotropics and Asia have reported higher positive results during this triennium, particularly Asia which has reported an increase from 20% positive response in COP9 to 54% for this reporting period. Africa has reported a lower figure of 10% positive in this triennium from the 20% reported in 2005. A paucity of funding, frequently noted in the text answers, is of course a key factor for lack of improvement in these figures rather than a lack of understanding of the utility of wetland education centres in promoting the wise use of wetlands.
46. Although it is not possible to determine how many new centres have been set up in this triennium, the text responses have indicated that a number of countries are either currently developing new centres or are planning to do so. To track such developments more efficiently in the new triennium, a more effective National Report indicator should be developed.
47. At the end of the last triennium, a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) was signed between the Ramsar Secretariat and Wetland Link International, a global network of wetland education centres managed by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust based in the United Kingdom. The MOC recognized the expertise available in wetland centres in developing CEPA approaches, programmes and activities for wetland wise use and agreed on key areas of cooperation. At the present time 344 centres in 75 countries are members of the WLI network; it is clear that, with more support through the Parties, this number could be significantly increased.
48. During the previous triennium, two national/regional WLI networks were launched: WLI-Australia and WLI-UK/Eire. WLI-Asia was launched in June 2005 and has progressed significantly during this triennium, holding a very successful WLI-Asia symposium meeting in January 2007 in Hong Kong, P.R.China, launching a dedicated Web site in September 2007, and producing several newsletters over the past two years. A second symposium is scheduled to take place in the Republic of Korea in October 2008. In September 2007 WLI-Canada was launched. The links between WLI and the Convention are strong and

provide an excellent platform for further development of this network, operating at global, regional and national levels, as an effective mechanism for the sharing of information and expertise on wetland CEPA.

49. In March 2006 WLI published a manual, *Developing a wetland centre: 1. Public centres & CEPA*, to assist in some aspects of wetland centre development. This is available in PDF format from the WLI Web site in Chinese, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. WLI also manages a global e-mail list for sharing information amongst those involved in managing wetland centres as well as other CEPA experts. An improved WLI Web site was launched in 2007.

Assessing national and local training needs and opportunities for wetland site manager training (*Indicators 4.10.2 and 4.10.3*)

50. Although the Convention's CEPA Programme over this triennium does not directly address training, it is implicit in any CEPA programme of work and will be more adequately addressed in the draft CEPA Programme being considered at COP10. During this triennium, an Advisory Board on Capacity Building for the Convention has been established through generous funding from the Netherlands government, with the aim of supporting and advising on capacity building developments within the Convention. The Advisory Board has met six times during the triennium and their reports and Rules of Procedure are available at http://www.ramsar.org/outreach_advisoryboard.htm. The Board works closely with the CEPA Oversight Panel in advising the Convention on capacity building issues. During this triennium the Board has begun the development of a capacity building framework to assist Parties in developing a capacity building programme. A side event on this at COP10 will provide feedback on the Framework from the key targets, the Ramsar Administrative Authorities, and following the side event the framework will be finalized and made available to Parties.
51. The National Reports investigated whether Parties had carried out an assessment of national and local training needs for implementing the Convention. The results revealed that only 19 Parties (15%) had done so, while 62 Parties (48%) responded negatively. No region reported well on this question and, in particular, under 15% of Parties in Africa, Europe, the Neotropics and North America responded positively. With such poor implementation results, it can only be hoped that the capacity building framework under development will be of some practical assistance to Parties in assessing their training needs at national and local levels.
52. Rather more positive were the responses on whether training opportunities for wetland managers had been provided by Parties. Globally, 52 Parties (40%) responded that training opportunities had been provided. While the Asian region was significantly ahead of others with a 58% positive response, Africa was the only region to return a positive response of less than 30%. Overall, 43 Parties (33%) responded that they had not provided wetland site manager training at national and local levels. The text responses indicated a mixture of approaches with single training events, regular events at the national and local level, and collaborative training events with neighboring countries.
53. The international course on Training of Trainers (ToT) has replaced the management training course run for 10 years by RIZA in the Netherlands in collaboration with the Ramsar Secretariat. Run every year by Wageningen International and RIZA (the latter only

until recently), with financial support from the Netherlands government, this course continues to give a strong focus to Ramsar and its guidance materials. The Convention is also benefiting at the regional level from the two Ramsar Regional Centres, located in Panama and Iran, the latter set up during the last triennium. CREHO, the centre based in Panama, now has annual training courses on site management and impact assessment. Both centres, however, are still significantly challenged by the lack of funds. It should also be recorded that the Convention benefits from the diverse wetland training activities carried out by Ramsar's five International Organization Partners, many of them associated with ongoing wetland management projects and programmes.

CEPA Programme implementation by the Secretariat

54. The Secretariat has a key role in communications within the Convention and performs this function largely through the Ramsar Web site, the Ramsar STRP Support Service Web site, a number of e-mail lists, the Ramsar Sites Information Service, reporting of the outcomes of Standing Committee and STRP meetings, organizing of regional meetings, and so on.
55. **E-mail lists:** The Secretariat manages a number of lists to improve communication and information-sharing within the Convention and with the public:
- Ramsar Wetlands Forum: an open, unmoderated list for news, views and queries on any wetland issue. Membership is currently more than 1,000.
 - Ramsar Exchange (separate lists in English, French and Spanish): closed lists for members of the Administrative Authorities, with announcements of all new Ramsar sites and Parties.
 - CEPA e-lists (in English, French and Spanish): open, unmoderated lists that include all the CEPA Focal Points (if they have functional e-mail addresses) as well as many others with an interest in wetland CEPA. The English list includes over 590 members, with Spanish and French at over 170 and 130 respectively. Messages posted since March 2004 are available online in the CEPA Web pages at http://www.ramsar.org/outreach_news.htm.
 - STRP National Focal Points: the original e-mail list has been largely superseded by the STRP Support Service.
56. **Publications and other communication activities during the triennium:**
- The 3rd Edition of the Ramsar Handbook series (17 volumes) was produced and widely distributed on CD-ROM and made available on the Web site.
 - The 4th edition of the Ramsar Manual was produced and made available on CD with the Handbooks and through the Web site.
 - World Wetlands Day materials are prepared and dispatched each year to over 4,000 contacts including Parties, NGOs, schools, site managers, and other institutions. Full details are available on the Ramsar Web site. Reports received from WWD actors are also posted on the Web site, though more reports have been received than Ramsar staff were able to keep up with.
 - A new video on wetlands and the Ramsar Convention, funded by Changwon City, Republic of Korea, is being produced and will be launched at COP10.

- An STRP newsletter was launched earlier this year as a key communication mechanism to more fully engage the STRP National Focal Points in the work of the STRP; two newsletters have been circulated electronically so far, and this will henceforth be a regular publication.
- In 2007 Austria funded and hosted a meeting of the European STRP National Focal Points, with assistance from the Secretariat, with the goal of improving the communication between the STRP NFPs and the main STRP membership.
- Launched at the last COP, the Ramsar Board game has been customised and produced in national languages by Hungary, Indonesia and Mexico during this triennium. It has also been produced in a floor-sized version in China and Mexico. In an additional seven countries, organizations (both government and NGO) are now in possession of the design files and are actively looking for funding to reproduce the game.